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The Daily Press

HONGKONG, OCTOBER 6th, 1870.

The announcement in the American papers brought by the present steamer that Mr. W. H. Seward has finally determined to set out to visit China, by the next Pacific Mail steamer, will no doubt be received with much satisfaction by all who are desirous that true impressions should be formed at home regarding the nature of affairs in this country.

The great drawback under which we labour out here, is that it is almost impossible to make people in America and in Europe aware of what actually are the opportunities on the one hand, and the difficulties on the other of foreign intercourse with China.

Statements on both sides are of the most exaggerated nature. One set of people have been in the habit of looking at the opportunities to such an extent as to lead to the impression that the Chinese merchant was a kind of commercial Caesar, who came, and conquered; that he had but to land in the country to find himself at once in an influential position and on the high road to fortune.

On the other hand, many have been led in their delusions that China is all a mistake; that the opportunities of advancement are of the smallest description, and in short that it is hardly worth while for ordinary commercial people to trouble themselves very much with regard to it. Both these views, it is needless to say, are very far from the truth.

That there is a large and important field for European and American enterprise in China cannot be ignored, nor can it be justly said that, even in the present day, there is not quite enough to repay those who turn their attention to it. But the time has passed altogether when rapid fortune can be looked for. To succeed in China, a man must now be content to devote himself to his work in earnest; and must here as everywhere else lay out his plans, and allow time to mature them. No body can now come to China for two or three years, and by dint of a few lucky strokes put himself in a position to leave the country with a fortune; but, because this cannot be done, there is no reason to conclude that China does not still present a good field for fair and legitimate enterprise.

With regard to political matters the same kind of misapprehension prevails almost throughout Europe and the United States. We find, as a rule, that people at home are incapable of understanding anything beyond the absurd yielding advocated by the BUNTING Mission, and an ideal of reckless and unrestrained bullying, such as has very unjustly been declared to be the traditional policy upheld by morantile men and other residents in these parts.

The truth, as we all know, lies between these two extremes. There is no necessity for being absurdly yielding on the one side, or unjustly high handed on the other. Our recognition of the rights of the Chinese Government must be regulated by the degree to which they show themselves capable of performing their duties and meeting the responsibilities of a civilized nation; and our demands for concessions must be based upon what may reasonably be asked from one nation of another. To jump at the conclusion that, because we have to treat China as a nation, we are bound to treat her precisely as if she were a thoroughly organized Empire, headed by a Government in whom we figure place entire confidence, is simply to ignore the plainest facts, and as a necessary consequence, to court those difficulties which must invariably arise when people persist in acting without due consideration of times and circumstances.

On the other hand, to ignore the existence of Chinese rights, and to treat the Chinese authority altogether, would be not only an injustice, but a great error, in the present day. A middle course has to be adopted. We should deal with the Chinese with due consideration of their rights; but we cannot deal with them upon principles which must end in the overthrow of our privileges and security. If we could thoroughly trust to their promises to respect foreign rights, and to protect foreign life, we could give up all idea of what is termed the "gunboat policy," but so long as we find that we cannot trust to them, either to prevent disturbances or to punish those concerned in them when they arise, we are forced into the position of having to choose between giving up our intercourse with the country altogether, or undertaking the duty of protecting ourselves, and if need be, of punishing those who commit outrages against us.

This is the rationale of the "gunboat policy." Were the Chinese able to perform towards us the duties of a Government, such a policy would be unjustifiable. As matters stand, it is a simple expedient. It does not, however, follow that because we are compelled to assume this somewhat anomalous position that we are therefore necessarily disposed to abuse it. Such a disposition has not in reality been shown; and there is not in the present day much danger of such being the case.

Notwithstanding many anomalies it has been possible gradually to establish a tolerable intercourse upon a fair and reasonable footing, and a large number of places and it will not be impossible to advance that intercourse to a point where it occupies a place in the history of only, we are forced upon a view of the character of the nature of existing circumstances, and have our policy upon a basis instead of upon theories.

It is a question, however, as to how far we may be able to go in this direction, as they may be to people out here, that we

wish to see instilled into the minds of the Government and people at home; and it is a matter for sincere congratulation that the advent of a statesman of Mr. Seward's matured experience will tend very much in this direction.

The facts connected with foreign intercourse with this country are such as nobody can grasp who has not an opportunity of personally investigating them, and as they are unique, and cannot be explained to "other" attempts, by any arguments from analogy. A short residence in the country will demonstrate to a statesman a true idea that the volume of diplomatic dispatches, and it may be fairly hoped that this will be the result of this visit, which Mr. W. H. Seward is about to make.

His being accompanied by Mr. Geo. F. Seward, Comptroller of the Customs, who is deeply versed in all matters connected with China, will greatly facilitate his acquisition of information, and if his political views in respect to this country should be modified, as those entertained by his nephew, there is no doubt that they will combine the advantages of being firm without being oppressive, and conciliatory without being weak.

As it has been very confidently stated, with a view to spreading a portion of the truth, that the visit of Mr. Seward to China will be the effect that the native authorities in connection with the Harbour Master's Department cause a good deal of annoyance to the American consular officials, and that the latter are in a position to do so, it is interesting to enquire how it is that the consular officials, who are in a position to do so, are not doing so.

The answer to this question is, that the consular officials are not doing so, because they are not in a position to do so. The consular officials are not in a position to do so, because they are not in a position to do so.

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JAPANESE DICTIONARY—A pocket

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